

Case Study: Skills and Accessible Tourism in Vanuatu

Projections indicate increased demand for accessible tours and activities across Vanuatu due to the increase in leisure travellers via cruise ships including older travellers and families with relatives with disability. Vanuatu Skills Partnership, through its Skills for Tourism and Disability Inclusion teams, have worked in collaboration with the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO) to facilitate the mainstreaming of disability inclusive and accessible tourism strategies since 2016. The Partnership has seen the introduction of accessible design principles into tourism product development and operator minimum standards as well as destination management through the national tourism website: www.vanuatu.travel.

2016

- ✓ Initial Disability Inclusion Awareness workshops with Skills for Tourism Industry Coaches and Training Providers.
- ✓ Inclusion of accessible tourism principles into the curriculum of the Certificate II Tourism (Tour Guiding) Basic Skills Cluster.
- ✓ The revision of Vanuatu Tourism Operator Minimum Standards to incorporate elements of accessible design principles into bungalow requirements.

2017

- ✓ Engagement of an Accessible Tourism Industry Coach, herself a person with disability with a Certificate III in tourism, to educate other industry coaches and key business clients on best practices regarding accessibility and inclusion for visitors with disability.
- ✓ Presentation on accessible tourism for all Skills for Tourism Industry Coaches by the new Accessible Tourism Industry Coach.
- ✓ Presentations on accessible tourism incorporated into the delivery of three Tourism Transport Driver Workshops in Luganville.
- ✓ Two inclusive skills development activities on Tanna as part of the Tanna Tourism Recovery Project.
- ✓ Accessible tourism coaching with 13 local tourism businesses in Espiritu Santo, including 11 tours and 2 accommodation operators, conducted by DOT Product Development Officer and Accessible Tourism Industry Coach.
- ✓ VTO includes a specific Accessible Tourism Page on their new website- site is under construction with limited content due to a lack of information from the industry in Port Vila.
- ✓ At request of the DOT, Vanuatu Skills Partnership supports the development of a Bungalows' Accessibility Checklist for the Tanna Tourism Recovery Project (supported by the Skills for Tourism and Skill for Construction initiatives).

2018

- ✓ At the request of the VTO, development of a Hotel Accessibility Checklist and auditing tool.
- ✓ Site visits, including access audits, conducted at 16 Hotels and Resorts, by VTO Information and Research Officers and Accessible Tourism Industry Coach in Port Vila and North Efate.
- ✓ As a result of the site visits, new content and information goes live on 'Accessible Tourism' Page on the new Vanuatu Travel Website in both French and English.

At request of the VTO and DOT, Vanuatu Skills Partnership is currently supporting:

- The development of an Accessibility Checklist and auditing tool for Tours & Activities.
- A professional photography shoot to showcase accessible and inclusive destination and products in Port Vila and North Efate on the Vanuatu Travel website and other promotional avenues.
- Second accessible tourism coaching and audit with 13 local tourism business in Santo, to follow up on action plans.

Stakeholders

- Department of Tourism: Product Development and Quality Standards Management as well as key tourism sector business clients.
- Vanuatu Tourism Office: Destination Marketing and Promotion.
- PSET Suppliers: Tourism Training Providers and Industry Coaches delivering inclusive skills development activities.
- Vanuatu Skills Partnership, through the Skills for Tourism and Disability Inclusion initiatives: support and advocacy.

Policy Links

	Policy Links
National PSET Policy	System Oversight Service Delivery Strategic Framework
Vanuatu Skills Partnership LTOs	Long Term Outcome 4. The status of women and people with disability is enhanced
National Sustainable Development Policy	3 Pillars: Society Environment Economy
National Disability Inclusive Development Policy	Strategic Priority Area 1: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
National Tourism Development Policy (forthcoming)	Goal 3: Visitor experiences that reflects the vision and values of Vanuatu's tourism industry

Short term outcomes

- The promotion and inclusion of people within disability as employees and consumers within the tourism sector is challenging and the changing of assumptions and negative attitudes has been helped by the work being led by a skilled and experienced Industry Coach who is herself a person with disability.
- Tourism sector government partners and industry members are more aware of the principles and importance of accessible and inclusive tourism. This is evident in the increased buy-in and ownership from DOT, VTO and industry through the request for more accessible coaching and audit activities and the planned focus of the 2018 National Tourism Forum in October as “Accessible and Inclusive Tourism”.
- Tools and checklists developed have now also been adapted and are being used in additional construction projects through the Partnership to promote accessibility in complementary sectors.
- As a result of the development of the Bungalows Accessibility Checklist and buy-in from the DOT, 9 businesses on Tanna are currently being renovated to meet universal accessibility standards through the Tanna Tourism Recovery Project.
- Since this initiative began, the Accessible Tourism Industry Coach was awarded a scholarship to undertake a Bachelor in Tourism Management at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. The Partnership continues to engage the Accessible Tourism Industry Coach as a specialist in her field when available.

Expected long term outcomes

- Vanuatu increasingly recognised as an accessible international destination due to enhanced quality standards and promotion.
- Economic benefits for local business (direct tourism providers and indirect sector linkages) through growth in numbers of travellers with disability and their families.
- Increased opportunities for more ni-Vanuatu people with disability to join the tourism workforce as attitudinal and infrastructure barriers are reduced.
- The industry will continue to develop through the increased awareness and recognition of the importance of the tourism sector as a driver of economic and social prosperity.



Freda's Story

Freda Willie was engaged as the first Skills for Tourism Accessible Tourism Industry coach in 2017. She holds a Certificate III in Tourism from the Australia-Pacific Technical College. She herself has faced barriers to employment and travel due to a mobility impairment and lack of accessible infrastructure in Vanuatu. Freda was engaged to deliver on-site business coaching in Santo specifically for tours and activities promoted to the cruise market. She was then engaged by the VTO to do a site audit of hotels and resorts in Port Vila and North Efate to support the development of content for the newly developed Accessible Tourism Page with www.vanuatu.travel. Freda is currently completing her Bachelor of Tourism Management at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and continues to provide phased on-site coaching and Accessible Tourism Auditing support during her study leave for the Skills for Tourism initiative.

Lessons Learned

- Having an Accessible Tourism Industry Coach who is a person with disability brings her own personal experiences which is powerful and effective for coaching activities and promotes more buy-in from partners and tourism business clients, and has created a demand for more Accessible Tourism Industry Coaches who are people with disabilities.
- Resources available through DFAT's Disability Inclusive Development Fund (DID) have enabled the provision of reasonable accommodations that enable full engagement of the Accessible Tourism Industry Coach, including presence of a personal assistant during field visits.
- Designated specific funding for DID activities including the professional photo shoot is helpful to maximise the promotion of Vanuatu as an accessible destination within VTO.

Opportunities

- Further online promotion of accessible tourism products and wider destination marketing through the Provincial Travel Centre Network, particularly in Santo.
- Collaboration with training providers to ensure the delivery of inclusive tourism training.
- Extend this approach with other Partnership priority sectors (handicrafts, agriculture) to improve opportunities for ni-Vanuatu with disability to engage in paid work linked to the tourism value-chain.